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JULY 1968

Prabuddha Bharata

**OR
AWAKENED INDIA**



**By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or
all of these the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.**

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JULY 1968

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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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Vol. LXXIII

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No. 7



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—:o:—

LETTERS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

(144)

Sri Ramakrishna Math
Belur Math, Howrah
5 September, 1930

Dear Sriiman —,

I am very glad to receive your letter. When you received your initiation from here, that very time I told you, 'Sri Ramakrishna is God Himself. For the good of men, he incarnated Himself in human form. Supremely compassionate and loving towards His own devotees, He is the Supreme Master, the inner controller and the indwelling self of all. He is to be realized at heart through meditation, *japa*, worship, prayer and study. He grants His vision to His devotees and fulfills their heart's desire, whenever they seek Him with an earnest heart. One is to seek Him with all sincerity and the seeking is to come within. As soon as one sees Him, all the darkness of the mind vanishes away and one attains self-knowledge and becomes blessed.' Therefore, stick to the daily spiritual practice as I have instructed you. Then only you will feel peace and joy in your mind and gradually realize the Master.

With regard to the questions which have come up in your mind, I write the following : You can pay obeisance mentally. Good will come to you on the merit of that very bit. Whenever any question crops up in your mind, put that to me through letters. I will reply to that. Service? My child, there is no need of any service for this body. Moreover, you are all far off from here. So whenever it is convenient for you or whenever you desire,

send what you can for the service of the Master. We feel happy only when the Master is served. He is our everything and all. Everything will be fulfilled by His service only. The world will be pleased, only if He is pleased.

My health is not going well. Yet somehow I am carrying on. My much love and blessings to you all. I pray so that you may grow in your devotion, faith and love day by day and remain in bliss. Divine Mother Durgā will be worshipped this year in the Math in image and the image is nearing completion.

Your ever well-wisher,

Shivananda

P.S. Self-knowledge conveys no other thing but realizing Him as the indwelling Self. It is realizing Him in the heart.

One needs spiritual practice in order to know God and recognize Divine incarnations. Big fish live in the large lake, but to see them one must throw spiced bait in the water. There is butter in milk, but one must churn the milk to get it. There is oil in mustard seed, but one must press the seed to extract the oil.

—Sri Ramakrishna

THE VEDĀNTIST : HIS HUMAN PERSONALITY

[EDITORIAL]

Does Vedānta make the Vedāntist dry? : The Vedāntist is a person who follows the path of Vedānta. For him, Brahman alone is real and the world of plurality that moves around him is an illusion of Māyā. His austere reason and remorseless logic find no truck with any dogma, imagery, sentiment, emotionalism or attachment to the hopes and beliefs of the human mind. Identity of his own self with Brahman, which is *nirguṇa* and *nirviśeṣa*, is his eternal quest; 'That Thou Art' is his sole dictum and realization of the Oneness of Brahman is his only liberation. Always moving with a sharp and discriminating intellect, he shakes off all the ties of human relationship with a merciless heart and rejects everything that stands in the way of his knowledge. The temporal world, which is transient, impure, flimsy, a mirage, a dream, suggests no definite meaning to him and offers no real suggestion for his goal. Spirit can have no relation with non-spirit. The individual can never co-exist with the universal. So the Vedāntist finds no reason to take interest in the affairs of the world and men. One who is most at home with the forensic view of justification and dwells on the ethereal plane of transcendental liberation cannot evidently be of a pietistic order. One for whom the world does not exist cannot but remain indifferent to the happenings of the world. 'Those whose sole purpose is the reflection on the Supreme Brahman have no respect for the creation of Māyā.' (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, III. i. 4)

Does Vedānta then destroy the human personality of the Vedāntist and make him a dry and heartless creature among men? Is he then an impractical visionary whose

intellectual musings never stand face to face with the joys and sufferings of the living human being? Such questions with regard to the human personality of the Vedāntist have been raised by different persons at different times. The Vedānta, which demands a subtlety of logic and precision of understanding to grasp it, has so often been misunderstood and, as a result, the personality of the Vedāntist, too, has come to be misinterpreted. In the life of Sri Ramakrishna, one finds Bhairavi Brahmani speaking to Sri Ramakrishna about the dryness of the realizations of Vedānta. Shortly after Sri Ramakrishna had completed the spiritual practices as prescribed by the Tantra with the guidance of Bhairavi Brahmani, the great Vedāntist Tota Puri arrived at the temple garden of Dakshineswar. When Tota initiated Sri Ramakrishna into the path of Vedānta, Bhairavi Brahmani tried her utmost to desist the latter from following that path which, according to her, was a dry one. Making a pointed reference towards Tota and his Vedāntic knowledge, she said to Sri Ramakrishna: 'My child, don't visit him often, don't mix much with him. His path is dry and austere. All your ardent affection and love for God will vanish, if you mix with him.' Needless to say, Sri Ramakrishna did not attach any importance to these words of Brahmani and his later grand realizations gave the lie to all unreasoned doubts about Vedānta. Knowledge of Vedānta, instead of destroying his human personality, expanded it into an infinite dimension. And for that infinite expansion, he drew his inspiration from Vedānta itself.

Two aspects of Vedāntic Truth : The truth of Vedānta has its two aspects—

positive and negative. It is negative in so far as the Vedāntist reaches the truth by a process of negation—*neti, neti* or 'this not', 'this not'. Here his Brahman is formless and unqualified; his *jīva*-hood is an ignorance; and the world is *mithyā* or false. Because he disowns all metaphysical status of the world, all forms of inter-human relationship and human feelings, which appear as mocking semblances of false existence, bear no meaning for him. In this negative aspect, the Vedāntist sees only the noumenon and not the phenomenon. Leaving aside all the adjuncts of body, mind and senses and going beyond the flux of names and forms, he visualizes within himself the complete identity of his own self with the cosmic Self, which is always in the nature of Knowledge-Existence-Bliss. Pure knowledge is his sole pursuit, illusion of *Māyā* is the only hindrance that stands in his way, and reason is his only working tool to dispel the veil of that illusion. The attitude of the Vedāntist at this stage becomes best reflected in the words of Goethe who said, 'Man is born not to solve the problems of the universe, but to find out where the problem begins, and then to restrain himself within the limits of the comprehensible.'

But then there is another movement of Vedāntic thought—the positive movement which begins after the Vedāntist has grasped the central truth of Vedāntic oneness. At this stage, he is a liberated soul and his vision is completely changed. The world is no longer a bondage to him and the manifold pluralities can no more deceive him. The scene remains the same but the new vision gives a new meaning to it and that meaning is the pervading consciousness of One in many. The pluralities, which were earlier rejected through the process of negation, become integrated now into one undivided existence. The Vedāntist, who was so long seeing

God within, now begins to see God both within and without. His Vedāntic realization becomes a positive and dynamic reality. With the advent of this positive realization, the dreaming idealism of the Vedāntist turns into an active realism through which he acquires an expansion of his human personality that not only thinks about the truth, but also feels the same truth with all his heart. There opens up before him a universe that becomes a symbol of Brahman. In the Upaniṣads, there are several stories where the world with all its multiplicities served as a vivid symbol of one vast truth to the Upaniṣadic sages. Swami Vivekananda recalls those stories, while he describes the significance of practical Vedānta. The truth of oneness was revealed to Satyakāma by the bull which he was rearing, by the fire which he was worshipping, and by the birds and the beasts which he met on his way while he was journeying to his teacher's house. Upakosala, a student of Satyakāma, learnt to see Brahman in everything from the fire which he was worshipping. The fire taught him :

'This earth, food, fire, and sun whom you worship, are forms of Brahman. The person that is seen in the sun, I am He. He who knows this and meditates on Him, all his sins vanish and he has long life and becomes happy. He who lives in the cardinal points, the moon, the stars, and the water, I am He. He who lives in this life, the ether, the heavens, and the lightning, I am He.'

Commenting on the meaningful suggestions of the stories, Swami Vivekananda writes :

'The things which they were worshipping, such as the fire, the sun, the moon, and so forth, and the voice with which they were familiar, form the subject of the stories which explain them and give them a higher

meaning. And this is the real, practical side of Vedānta. It does not destroy the world, but it explains it; it does not destroy the person but explains him; it does not destroy the individuality, but explains it by showing the real individuality. It does not show that this world is vain and does not exist, but it says, "Understand what this world is, so that it may not hurt you." The voice did not say to Upakosala that the fire which he was worshipping, or the sun, or the moon, or the lightning, or anything else, was all wrong, but it showed him that the same spirit which was inside the sun, and moon, and lightning, and the fire, and the earth, was in him, so that everything became transformed, as it were, in the eyes of Upakosala.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. II, pp. 311-312)

'According to Vedānta', Swami Vivekananda further says, 'when a man has arrived at that perception, he has become free, and he is the only man who is fit to live in this world. Others are not. The man who sees evil, how can he live in this world? His life is a mass of misery. The man who sees dangers, his life is a misery; the man who sees death, his life is a misery. That man alone can live in this world, he alone can say, "I enjoy this life, and I am happy in this life", who has seen the Truth, and the Truth in everything.' (ibid., p. 318-19)

By this positive Vedānta, the Vedāntist does not make any attempt to find nicest balance of temporalities and spiritualities. Positive Vedānta does not seek to make a compound of the real and the unreal. It is, on the other hand, spiritualizing the temporal and witnessing the pulsations of one single spirit everywhere. If it were not for that, Vedānta would carry no useful meaning to men as a practical religion. If Vedānta were not for something more than a negative conviction, the nothingness of all earthly things, it would be an

impractical philosophy preaching some fantastic intellectual quibbles and idle speculations. Vedānta would then exhaust itself in ejaculations and inaction and nourish complacency and pretension and a busy occupation with a dry dialectic; instead of a reverent contemplation of great fact, it proclaims a truth which is both positive and practical.

'The Vedānta also says', observes Swami Vivekananda, 'that not only can this be realized in the depths of forests or caves, but by men in all possible conditions of life. We have seen that the people who discovered these truths were neither living in caves nor forests, nor following the ordinary vocations of life, but men who, we have every reason to believe, led the busiest of lives, men who had to command armies, to sit on thrones, and look to the welfare of millions—and all these, in the days of absolute monarchy, and not as in these days when a king is to great extent a mere figure-head. Yet they could find time to think out all these thoughts, to realize them, and to teach them to humanity.' (ibid., Vol. II, p. 296)

Where Vedānta is a living gospel: Out of this positive movement of Vedāntic thought emerges the true human personality of the Vedāntist. This personality is not the individualized universal (*viśeṣātma-bhāva*) but universalized individual (*sarvātmabhāva*) that recognizes man as the embodiment of divinity. For this personality, there is no sin but only error or weakness, no hatred but only love, no compassion but service. How can the Vedāntist, who sees all beings as his own self, bear hatred towards his fellowmen? There cannot be any question of sin where all are the varied manifestations of the same one Reality. So the feeling human heart, which the Vedāntist develops, is quite in keeping with his thinking head. It is all-embracing as well as all-encompassing. It is

proportionate to his gigantic divine stature that he acquires through the realization of a gigantic oneness. All the great teachers who lived and preached the gospel of Vedānta, felt the throbbing of this gigantic heart within them.

Vedānta, for Śaṅkara, was not mere dry intellectualism. It was a grand practical philosophy which was human and divine at the same time. Śaṅkara's human heart always bled for the poor. Once while a boy, Śaṅkara went for alms to the house of a Brahmin woman who was very poor. The devoted old lady gave boy Śaṅkara only one *āmalaka* fruit (myrobalan), for she had nothing to give except that very thing. The poverty of the woman moved Śaṅkara's heart to such compassion that tears rolled down from his two eyes. Śaṅkara fervently prayed to the goddess of wealth so that good fortune might smile upon the poor hard-pressed Brahmin woman. The prayer of the pure-hearted Śaṅkara could not go in vain. Tradition has it that in the next morning the woman found the courtyard of her house strewn with many *āmalaka* fruits made of gold. The Vedānta of Śaṅkara did not prevent him from being a loving son to his own old mother. The intrepid Vedāntist performed the last rites of his dear mother even though such an act was in violation of the rules of the monastic order he embraced.

Life of Sri Ramakrishna in modern times was a living gospel of practical Vedānta. It was Vedānta in and through. By way of illustration here, we may reproduce a few incidents which have been recorded by the author of the book *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master* :

'At one time a particular spot of the garden of the Kālī temple was covered with newly grown *Durvā* grass and was beautiful to look at. While he was looking on it, the Master transcended the normal consciousness and was feeling identified

with that spot when a man just happened to walk across that field, at which he became very restless feeling unbearable pain in his chest. Mentioning that event, he said to us later, "I then felt just that kind of pain which is felt when anybody tramples on one's chest." (p. 266)

Again :

'One day the Master while in *Bhāvasamādhi* was looking on the Gaṅgā, standing at the spacious *ghāt* with the open portico. Two boats were at anchor at the *ghāt* and the boatmen were quarrelling over some matter. The quarrel became gradually bitter and the stronger man gave a severe slap on the back of the weaker. At that, the Master cried out suddenly with pain. Hriday [the nephew of Sri Ramakrishna] heard it from the Kālī temple, went there quickly and saw that the Master's back had become red and swollen. Impatient with anger, Hriday said repeatedly, "Uncle, show me the man who had beaten you; I'll tear off his head." When afterwards the Master quietened down a little. Hriday was astonished to hear the event and thought, "Is it ever possible"?' (ibid.)

The feeling of this all-pervading Brahman pulsating in all beings did not result in Sri Ramakrishna's heart in the wake of any feat of temporary excitement or emotion. It was rather an abiding realization that had its application in every step of his life and conduct. Sri Ramakrishna's Vedānta in practice once proved to be an eye-opener to Tota Puri, the great wandering teacher who taught him the gospel of Vedānta. Details of the incident, as recorded in the book *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master*, are being reproduced here :

'On another occasion the Master was sitting after dusk near the Puri's *Dhuni*. In the course of conversation about God the minds of both the Master and that saint ascended to a very high plane and were going to merge in the non-dual

knowledge. And the Self in the *Dhuni* near them was, as it were, blazing, throbbingly feeling Its oneness with the Self in them and smiling blissfully by manifesting a thousand tongues! Just at that time a servant of the garden wanted to have a smoke and preparing tobacco in his bowl came up there for some charcoal fire and started taking it by putting a piece of burning wood from the *Dhuni* into his bowl. Merged in conversation with the Master and enjoying the bliss of the non-dual Brahman within, the saint was so long not aware of his coming and taking charcoal fire from the *Dhuni*. Now all of a sudden he noticed that and, extremely annoyed and angry, began to call him names and threatened him a blow or two with the pair of tongs. For, we have already said the holy men of the Nāgā denominations worship and show great respect to fire in the form of *Dhuni*.

'Raising a roar of laughter in the state of partial external consciousness, the Master exclaimed suddenly at this behaviour of the Puri, "Ah, wretchedness! Ah, forgetfulness!" He said it over and over again, laughed and rolled on the ground. Tota was surprised to see that mood of the Master and said, "Why are you doing like that? Just see how wrong it was on the part of the man." The Master laughed and said, "Yes that is true; but I see at the same time the depth of your knowledge of Brahman! Just now you were saying 'there is nothing except Brahman and all things and persons in the universe are merely Its manifestations.' But forgetting everything the very next moment you are ready to beat a man! This is why I laugh to think of the omnipotence of Māyā." Hearing this, Tota became serious and silent for a short time and then addressing the Master said, "You are quite right; under the influence of anger I forgot everything indeed."'

(pp. 487-88)

There is nothing like the knowledge of Vedānta to lead a man into the light of naked truth but this knowledge becomes sterile, unless new inspiration and invention come to guide it. Knowledge is strong only in proportion as it is directly and inevitably called into activity by its proper objects. Vedāntic truth is strong only because the Vedāntist can carry it into every aspect of his life; and only in proportion to its practical application, is that truth strictly living. It is through this practical application that the Vedāntist expresses his human personality, which is full of true human feelings. His compassion and love for his fellow men are strong, because he is strongly moved by their sufferings. It is the Vedāntist who can give true soothing succour to people, because he can feel the grief and sorrow of others with his entire being. When the direct motive for any of our human behaviour is strong, the action of the accessory motive is excluded. And because this direct motive of doing good to the people is strong and genuine in a Vedāntist, he can speak through his heart when he gives them the soothing, he unconsciously moves his arm when he gives them the succour. Another incident from the life of Sri Ramakrishna can be recalled as an illustration in this context;

Manimohan Mallick, an old man and a well-known devotee, one day came to Sri Ramakrishna at the temple garden of Dakshineswar with a grief-stricken heart. Manimohan's young promising son had suddenly died. Manimohan came to Dakshineswar straight from the cremation ground where he had gone to perform the last rites of his dead son. He looked haggard in appearance and his heart was heavy with deep sorrow. All who were present there in the room of Sri Ramakrishna tried to console Manimohan but the old man proved to be disconsolate. Saluting Sri Ramakrishna, he sat with his sorrowful heart.

Sri Ramakrishna, although he was listening to Manimohan's words of grief, spoke nothing to him. Everybody became surprised to note this attitude of indifference on the part of Sri Ramakrishna towards Manimohan. Then all of a sudden Sri Ramakrishna passed into a state of divine semi-consciousness and with the pose and energy of a wrestler sang out a song :

Oh man, prepare yourself for battle.

There, see Death entering your house
in battle array

(Therefore) ride on the chariot of
great virtue

Harness to it the two horses of devotion
and spiritual practice,

Stretch up the bow of knowledge,

And set the unfailing arrow of the love
of God...

The tune of the song with its depiction of heroic renunciation and strength generated great spiritual fervour which overwhelmed every heart. Manimohan, too, felt consoled and became calm and grave. After some time, Sri Ramakrishna sat by the side of Manimohan and feelingly said, 'Ah ! What burning pain is there on earth which can compare with the grief at the death of a son ? A son is born of this sheath (body) ; isn't he ? So his relation with the body persists as long as it lasts.' While consoling Manimohan, Sri Ramakrishna began to describe the death of Aksay, his own nephew, in a vivid and touching language. He said :

'Aksay died. I felt nothing at the time. I was standing and was witnessing how man dies. I saw there was, as it were, a sword in a sheath and the sword was brought out of it. The sword was not at all affected. It remained as it was and the sheath lay there. I felt great joy to see it. I laughed and sang and danced. They then burnt the body and returned. The next

day I was standing there (pointing to the verandah to the east of the room and near the courtyard of the Kālī temple), and do you know what I felt ? I felt as if my heart was being wrung in the way a wet towel is wrung. My heart was feeling for Aksay like that. I thought, "Mother, this (his body) has no relation with even the wearing cloth ; ah how great was then the relation with the nephew. When it is so even here (with himself), how agonizing the pain must be to the householders :"'

(*Vide : Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master*, pp. 343-44)

Sri Ramakrishna thereupon described how shortlived the worldly things and relations are. Sri Ramakrishna's deep feelings and words of comfort soothed the grief of Manimohan. Manimohan said to Sri Ramakrishna, 'This was why, Sir, I came running to you. I knew that there was no one else who could assuage this fire of grief.' (ibid)

In the incident narrated above, the human personality of the Vedāntist becomes manifested in all its grandeur. Here one finds the Vedāntist sitting by the side of the common man, sharing his sorrow and sufferings and giving him consolation in his grief with profound and unselfish warmth of feeling and scrupulous truthfulness. This is the positive human personality which is stronger and wider than the whole creed of Vedānta and whose presence intensifies all noble feeling, encourages every noble effort, pours new life into our languid love, gives firmness to our vacillating ideal and ensures ultimate triumph over all dogmatic perversions. This human personality with its broad human heart, throbbing with infinite love and boundless compassion towards all beings, high or low, makes Vedānta a living and enduring religion throughout the ages.

ETERNAL TRUTHS IN A CHANGING WORLD :

THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

MR. MALCOLM M. WILLEY

A birth anniversary should always be a serious occasion, for it is the special day when one looks simultaneously both to the past and the future. And if the anniversary is one of a man of greatness, it is all the more important that the dual aspects of the day be taken solemnly. It was on the 18th of February in 1836 that the third son of Khudiram and Chandra was born—Gadadhar he was named, the 'bearer of the mace', and even at the moment of his birth it was evident that he was a child of exceptional qualities.

The date 1836 is now one hundred and thirty-two years in the past—and it is this fact that first of all, gives me pause as I think about the life of the infant who in the course of time was to become Ramakrishna, a man—a saint—whose spiritual influence would prove to be for all mankind a powerful and universal force for good. I am not going to repeat here the story of that life, for the details of it, and the richness of its significance, are known to most of you in great depth of meaning. Rather, I hope you will think it appropriate for me to bring to our attention and emphasize briefly this afternoon, one or two aspects relating to the life of Ramakrishna that seem to me to have special importance as we, living in the second half of the twentieth century, look back to a date in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Let me try to make clear what I want to say by first recalling what the world of our ancestors and the world of Ramakrishna's

mother and father, was like in 1836. In his fascinating and illuminating biography, *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, Christopher Isherwood begins his story by describing the village in which Ramakrishna was born. Kamarpukur, in West Bengal, was a village of mud huts and thatched roofs, where life was lived in complete simplicity. A central well, or tank, was the source of life-sustaining water, which villagers carried to their homes in brass or clay pots. In the fields the soil was tilled, preparatory to the planting of rice, by using a wooden plough pulled by oxen or water-buffalo. There would have been palms, and mango trees. There would have been no formal school. There would be temples and numbers of shrines. The word 'simple' is the one that best describes such a village as Kamarpukur—both the environmental setting as well as the life of the men and women and children who lived there. In many ways, it was a good life, if not always an easy one, for each individual of the community did know where he belonged in the life of the village—what his responsibilities were, what his relationships with his fellow villagers were, what was expected of him, and what he might expect of others. Everyone, lived from day to day, and horizons of life were narrow. Yet an identity with the round of village life did exist, and individuals were bound together in common activity that made existence meaningful. There was, as Isherwood puts it, a 'pattern of social order... This pattern is based upon the caste-system. The members of each caste share the village between them, respecting each other's separateness yet living in interdependence'.

My description of an Indian village at the

* Text of the address delivered at a public meeting held on the occasion of the Birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna at Belur Math, Howrah, West Bengal, on March 1, 1968.

time of the birth of Ramakrishna is of course incomplete and sketchy. But all I am trying to do is make the point in an almost literal sense, that the village of Kamarpukur in 1836 was symbolical of the world generally—small, inbred, self-contained, static. It gave a small picture of what the larger world was also like. I think it is also interesting to remember that in so far as everyday living conditions are involved, it was not unlike the world into which Jesus had been born (in far away Bethlehem), or the world of Buddha, Mohammed, or Aristotle—or any other of the great religious or intellectual personages of the remote past. The fundamental ideas that shape our religious thought today—Christianity, Buddhism, Islam—all originated in and came in their basic essentials from a world that in its general characteristics was not unlike the world in which the tiny village of Kamarpukur existed.

But that was 1836 and we are living in 1968. And what a different world it now is! If there is a single word to describe the differences between then and now, it is the word *change*. Perhaps the village of Kamarpukur itself has not changed much in its particular pattern of life, but the world of which it is a part has done so. No longer, by any stretch of language or imagination, can it be said that the village where Ramakrishna was born is typical or symbolical of the world today. And the villager in Kamarpukur in 1968, although he may outwardly appear to be believing in a manner not unlike that of his ancestors of a hundred and thirty-two years earlier, nevertheless is, in fact, psychologically, socially, sociologically living on what may in truth be described as 'a new earth'.

It is not only in material things that the changes are apparent. My grandfather—whose memory I revere—was born at about the same time as Ramakrishna, in a small community in eastern Canada. The little

town where he first saw the light of day was perhaps in some respects more developed than Kamarpukur, but my grandfather could have felt at home in Ramakrishna's village. What happened in the lifetime of my grandfather, and since, dramatically represents what change can mean in the life of man. Of course, the changes in mechanical things are obvious: over networks of hard-surfaced roads, automobiles and buses criss-cross a nation. Electric motors make machines whirl to do many of man's jobs—from pumping water to sawing wood. Today, I can make a journey in six hours that took my grandfather weeks to accomplish. Electric driven looms now rapidly produce fabrics by the metre that once were only woven laboriously by hand. Airplanes fly above Kamarpukur, cutting the clouds at a speed of six hundred miles an hour and more. This is a machine age—an era of power mechanics, and while pumps and tractors and electric motors may not yet be found in the village of Ramakrishna's birthplace, they have nevertheless had their indirect impact, and this is felt in many ways. The growth of the industrialized cities, which like great magnets draw to themselves an ever increasing number of men and women from the rural areas, has caused a breakdown of many of the old traditions, the old ways, the stability of living. There are new and wider contacts—a broadening of horizons. Over the highways run buses that link the village with the metropolis. Life has become more mobile, and with mobility earlier personal relationships are weakened and shattered. Impersonality is substituted. My contacts with fellow human beings in the vast city are psychologically different than they were with my neighbours in the village. My own sense of 'who I am' and 'where do I fit in the scheme of things', which was well-developed and well-defined in the village, is distorted and twisted in a city-dominated world. My identity with life is less clear,

less certain than it used to be. It is more and more 'the era of anonymity'—to use a phrase of the sociologists. The examples could be multiplied almost endlessly: in material things, in the application of power to do man's work, in the subtleties of human relationships, the change is vast, is profound, is far-reaching, and is characteristic of modern life. This is the era of change—and let anyone who would doubt this compare the world of 1836 with our world of today. Nothing now seems fixed, nothing seems stable, all life appears as if in flux.

And yet, how valid is a quick conclusion that *all* is changing, and will change still more? Does nothing endure in an age when men circle the earth in the stratosphere, and are about to land upon the surface of the moon?

My first observation, that I should like you to accept, paradoxical or inconsistent though it may seem to be, is that impressive as are the mechanical and scientific wonders that man has wrought, and though the momentum they have acquired emphasizes and makes conspicuous vast changes in life—to the point that only *change* seems real—the important, essential fact of life is that the significance of the obvious change is deceptive, for beneath it lie truths that are unchanging, truths that are as valid in an aeroplane and space craft age as they are in an age of ox carts.

That was a rather long and wordy sentence. Let me put my thought more directly: it is false, it is wrong, to assume that just because the world seems to be undergoing rapid change, nothing stable and enduring remains in life. It is a mistake to look only at things that are changing, no matter how much they compel our attention, and to overlook or ignore the reality that lies beneath the surface of change. There are abiding truths whose significance overshadows all the changes modern science and technology have created. Change is

dazzling, and the mind turns toward it like a child drawn by the brilliance of the rising sun. But because something glitters (as the saying goes) it may not be gold. The golden truth, indeed, is that behind all instances of change, behind the dazzling wonders of a machine age, there are never-changing realities that must be, and can be, the primary and guiding influences as man seeks to build a better world—a world of peace, of stability, of what Ramakrishna would call spirituality.

And where do I find any evidence for what I am saying? It is in the life of Ramakrishna that the proof becomes evident. For here was a man—and I quote Romain Rolland—whose image 'was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people... His soul animates modern India... He was a little village Brahmin of Bengal, whose outer life was set in a limited frame... But his inner life embraced the whole multiplicity of men and gods'. He was timeless, ageless.

To me, one great significance of Ramakrishna lies in his recognition that there are enduring truths that man can, and must, accept. Truth, in whatever field it may reside (spiritual, religious, political, scientific), cannot be the possession of any limited group of nations or individuals. Truth is universal, and while the words with which it is made manifest may vary, the substance is ever the same. Ramakrishna made this clear.

This explains, too, why Ramakrishna could spend one period of his life immersing himself in the Christian religion. He could, as has been said, break through the false barriers that seem to separate Hinduism and Christianity, and 'enter a new realm of ecstasy. Christ possessed his soul'. For him, Christ became not only the Incarnation of God, he was equally the incarnation of Buddha and Kṛṣṇa. In similar manner, in another phase of his own unfolding, Ramakrishna practised the rites of Islam. He could accept Islam, because he saw, not with

any cold intellectualism of mind, but with the white heat of inner ecstasy, that abiding truths were there—just as they were the essence of Christianity or of his own Hinduism. ‘The substance’, he said, ‘is *one* under different names, and everyone is seeking the same substance. Only climate, temperament, and name create differences... Let each man follow his own path’, he implored. ‘If he wishes sincerely and ardently to know God, peace be unto him. He will surely realize Him.’

As Swami Nikhilananda has put it, ‘He was firmly convinced that all religions are true, that every doctrinal system represents a path to God... He was the first religious prophet recorded in history to preach the harmony of religions’. It is my point that he could preach this harmony, because he knew that in each religion the basic and unchanging truth is the same. The enduring truth became his gospel, just as it *should* be yours and mine. This was his great revelation, his great contribution to mankind—and the source of the enormous power that he could exert. Is it a less valid truth today than it was when revealed in the life of Ramakrishna himself, a century and three decades ago?

Perhaps the most impressive quality in the life of Ramakrishna—the truth that he himself continuously demonstrated in his own life and teaching—is his conception of *Man* as a being. The potential for goodness, for spirituality, exists in all men. ‘Know truth for yourself’, is the way his great disciple Swami Vivekananda summarizes this concept. Man must be accepted for what he is, in terms of enduring and inherent goodness. Ramakrishna, as his biographers make unmistakably clear, lived this doctrine. Swami Vivekananda could write of him, ‘He criticized no one. For years I lived with that man... He condemned no one, but saw the good in all’.

This is another eternal truth that Ramakrishna’s life shows to us. It sorely needs to be accepted and applied in these war-torn and disruptive days in which we live. What, I ask in all seriousness, could the universal acceptance of this truth mean in the lives of Vietnamese (north or south), in the lives of Chinese (whether followers of Mao or Chiang Kai-Shek), in the lives of Russians, Americans and Indians, in the lives of people wherever they live, to whatever nation they pledge loyalty, to whatever sect they may belong, whatever the colour of their skin? Ramakrishna saw and experienced the truth; it is for us to accept and apply it. Nothing else matters, for what good is it to a man to possess automobiles, to achieve vast wealth, to be secure in his comforts, and self-indulgence, if the inner potential that constitutes the inherent greatness of all men, lies dormant and bitterness and hatred and selfishness prevail. ‘When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey; so let the lotus of your character be full blown and the results will follow’. Those are Ramakrishna’s words and in quoting this passage Vivekananda adds, ‘This is a great lesson to learn’. Learning about change is important, but its importance is nothing compared with realization and acceptance of the truths that are the embodiment of Ramakrishna’s life. For they—let me summarize—represent that which endures through all eternity, whereas change is ever temporal. In the material world what is here today is gone tomorrow. In the spiritual world, the world that Ramakrishna’s life reveals to us, truth is the same yesterday, today, forever. It is the discovery, the revelation of this eternal wisdom that is Ramakrishna’s great gift to mankind—in his own life, and in the lives of his disciples and followers.

How more appropriately could I conclude these humble remarks commemorating the truth of Ramakrishna than by quoting the

first lines of Swami Vivekananda's 'A Hymn to the Divinity of Sri Ramakrishna':

We salute thee!
Lord! Adored of the world, ...

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPT OF SERVICE (PART—II)

SWAMI SWAHANANDA

WORK AND WORKERS

Spiritual motivation

What type of service did Swami Vivekananda want his people to render to society? And what type of training for workers did he visualize to work out that scheme? Religion is his fulcrum for all social action. His 'Practical Vedānta' or service of society with a religious motivation is, in a sense, an original contribution. It is not that the idea was not there. But it was Swami Vivekananda who forcefully presented the idea of looking upon man as God and serve him. Philosophically, there are two ways of looking upon the world. The negative way is to reject it, it being an illusion in the form in which it presents itself before us. The positive way is to look to its fundamental basis, the ultimate Reality which alone exists. This is the deification of the world as preached by Swami Vivekananda, as against the traditional negation of it. Both are true from different standpoints, but the deification has a tremendous social value. In all spheres, understanding among different groups is reached by overlooking the differences and stressing upon the common points. Men are equal, we say. We know they are not so in the purely physical sense but they are so in a special sense. From the standpoint of worship, too, this attitude is valid. To consider God as man will be idolatry, but to look upon man as God will be symbology and symbology is an accepted mode of worship in the religi-

ous system. So hard work with unselfishness plus the particular attitude is all that is necessary in this worship.

This worshipful attitude to men as God has been described as the socialization of the Absolute. The realization of the ultimate Reality is true religion, which in its expression is both individual and social. This realization is individual but men of realization see God everywhere as the Spirit, as the sum total of all souls. Seeing God in society thus becomes a spiritual discipline. When God is thus realized, service of society becomes service of God. It is then a distinct method of *sādhana*, which is nothing but the imitation of saint's experience and hence is not insincere. That is why vedānta teaches the deification of the world, which idea has been very forcefully presented by Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on 'God in everything'.

As a result of this attitude, there arises a tremendous social gain. The individual benefits from it by being free from the dichotomy of sacred and secular, of contemplation and action. Men of social awareness find it more conducive. The difficulty of forgetting God or losing the poise in the crowded programme may be overcome by constant awareness and intensification of the attitude or by combining work and worship. The three stages of 'work and worship', 'work as worship' and 'work is worship' come to a spiritual aspirant step

by step. Even the great devotees, who did not consciously follow work as a discipline, came to the realization that whatever we do is nothing but worship. This spiritual method of seeing the Divine in society and serving it is suited to the modern temper and is also available to those who lack faith. Socialization is a modern fad. Awareness of it is imperative for modern minds. And as Victor Hugo puts it, 'Nothing is so powerful in the world as an idea whose time has come.' That is the reason of the tremendous popularity and impact of Swami Vivekananda's *Karma-Yoga* and 'Practical Vedānta'.

This stress on spirituality is not merely for social workers; it is to play an important part in the lives of those who are to be regenerated. He felt that mass education must not disturb the religion of the people, which is essential for a complete life and which fosters the higher virtues so necessary for society. In all their changes, the central point is spirituality. True religion must light up the mind of man and give him all the strength that is necessary. So Swami Vivekananda said :

'Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting about idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, "O ye brothers, all arise! Awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!" Go and advise them how to improve their own condition, and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the śāstras, by presenting them in a lucid and popular way... Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brāhmaṇas. Initiate all, even down to the Caṇḍālas, in these fiery *mantras*. Also instruct them in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc.' (Swami Viveka-

nanda on India and Her Problems, Compiled by Swami Nirvedananda, pp. 71-73)

Patriotism

Swami Vivekananda was a lover of his country. To him patriotism was an expression of true worship and loving service to fellowmen, a means to the realization of the highest. It was merging of one's whole personality into the soul of his people. Everyone has to be a patriot. And what is his definition of a patriot?

'They talk of patriotism... First feel from the heart... Through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates; love is the gate to all the secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots! Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your dearest ones, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, pp. 225-26)

Because of his deep love for his country, Swami Vivekananda has rightly been described as the 'Patriot-Monk of India'.

Sister Nivedita graphically describes in her book *The Master as I saw Him* (pp. 46-49) the dual aspect of Swami Vivekananda's genius as a lover of his country and as a teacher of spirituality and the inevitable conflict born of them:

'From the moment of my landing in

India, however, I found something quite unexpected underlying all this... It was the personality of my Master himself, in all the fruitless torture and struggle of a lion caught in net.

'But wherein lay the struggle? Whence came the frequent sense of being baffled and thwarted? Was it a growing consciousness of bodily weakness, conflicting with the growing clearness of a great purpose? ... Banished to the Himalayas with shattered health, at the very moment when his power had reached its height, he had written a letter to an English friend which was a cry of despair.

'To what was the struggle actually due? Was it the terrible effort of translating what he had called the "superconscious" into the common life? Undoubtedly he had been born to a task which was in this respect of heroic difficulty. Nothing in this world is so terrible as to abandon the safe paths of accepted ideals, in order to work out some new realization, by methods apparently in conflict with the old... Certainly in years to come, in the last five and a half years, particularly, which were his crowning gift to his own people, he stood for work without attachment, or work for impersonal ends, as one of the highest expressions of the religious life. And for the first time in the history of India an order of monks found themselves banded together, with their faces set primarily towards the evolution of new forms of civic duty.'

How to reconstruct India

Much before the independence of India Swami Vivekananda appeared on the Indian firmament with his original ideas for reconstructing India. The paramount necessity was to arouse enthusiasm of the enduring type coupled with a clear vision of the future. An understanding of the Indian temperament and fundamental aspiration has to be there for proper propelling of the national zeal.

Tremendous *rājasic* mentality had to be created and to hold the zeal together a consciousness of India as a synthetic whole had to be presented before the society. Lack of unity is a bane to newly freed zealous countries, as we see before our eyes. Unity will be achieved, true nationhood would be a fact, if we could create an inner consciousness of a common ideal, common struggle and common feeling among the different constituents of the nation. Patriotism is a means but often it is bedeviled by parochialism because of its stress on group interest. Unity of purpose and striving could be brought in India minus the bad effects, if it could be inspired by a higher ideal. The spiritual quest itself could be made the motive power of Indian nationalism, spiritual realization being its goal. Improving of material standards of life, economic growth, industrial development, scientific progress,—all would find their proper place in the total scheme of all round regeneration of India. That is what Swami Vivekananda wanted. So he exhorted Indians to live up to the ideal to bring about the model society where material and spiritual forces are well balanced. True spiritualization is a slow process. But a mere political nationality is apt to be belligerent to keep the internal different forces together for work, if it is based on pacts and compromises. In trying to accumulate strength for progress, tremendous *rājasic* zeal has to be released, material happiness has to be brought, it is true, but not at the cost of the spiritual ideal. Then India will have an imperfect civilization and will collapse sooner than expected like some of the predominantly materialistic civilizations of old. This danger of rejection of India's spiritual culture may come from three directions, he thought in the last years of the last century: (a) The land

could be converted to an exotic religion. (b) The lower castes could create a different religion. (c) A totally non-religious group could arise. The first, the efforts to convert the country to Christianity has failed as failed Islam in olden days. The danger of the second has also passed off. The third danger of materialistic secular democracy and extremely antispiritual dialectic materialism still continues. The first will bring in indifference and the aggressive second is bound to bring in conflict and civil war. The only solution lies in their being spiritualized retaining most of their economic and social programme. With this perspective, we can very easily understand why Swami Vivekananda was so anxious to retain the spiritual values. The method he suggested was to make the motive power of the national upheaval to be idealistic in nature and content and practice of *Karma-Yoga*, detached, unselfish action, for workers. Aiming high, they will at least practise enlightened self-interest as against gross selfishness. As it is commonly said, the most likely way of achieving a goal is not aiming at the goal itself but at some goal beyond it. Of course, for this a section of the people must be essentially dedicated to the spiritual ideal and will at the same time embody the best aspirations of the nation. They are not to be otherworldly but disinterestedly serviceful. They will be the fittest instruments to uphold the spiritual ideal before the nation. Not only that, the ideal has to be preached to other nations to bring the world round this ideal, thus paving the way for a peaceful, lasting, spiritual civilization. With that idea, he founded the Ramakrishna Math and Mission which would serve as the suitable model.

Heritage

In regenerating India, Swami Vivekananda often spoke of going back to the

past cultural heritage. Why did he glorify the past so much? Swami Vivekananda's idea was that to create enthusiasm in a huge nation it was necessary to arouse the national pride. And what have Indians to be proud of except this cultural heritage? He said:

'Nowadays, everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past, is the cause of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true. So long as they forget the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, p. 324)

The hypnosis of centuries of subjection made Indians weak. So rang out his message of strength based on the idea of superiority of India's cultural heritage. 'Back to the Upanishads!' he cried, 'Back to the strengthening, life-giving teaching of the Upanishads!' 'He who thinks that he is weak is weak: he who believes that he is strong is already invincible!' The *Gītā* to him, was 'a mine of strength'. Indians would arise anew when they assimilate this strength, this faith of the Upanishads. The sense of superiority of their cultural heritage would remove the hypnosis and put energy in his countrymen. That was his idea.

India can remain united only on the common ground of her sacred traditions. He said, 'The common ground that we have is our sacred traditions, our religion.' Nationality, to him, was not merely political, of having powers and rights and privileges but a sacred ideal 'whose inmost striving was to express its own conception of ideal manhood'. The political significance of nationality was necessary but his stress was on unity based on heart and spirit rather than on mind. He was international

in outlook because of his realization of the oneness of existence. Yet he was the very personification of the true Indian spirit.

Imitation

It is not required of modern India, according to him, to change her social or religious institutions, but all that was required was to put them in a position to work out the current problems in the light of the national ideals. He was against meaningless imitation. He knew that our Indian social system has many defects and they must be rectified. But he was against throwing off of our own age-old system and borrowing wholesale any new system including that of the West. He said :

'A child of but yesterday, destined to die the day after tomorrow comes to me and asks me to change all my plans and if I hear the advice of that baby and change all my surroundings according to his ideas I myself should be a fool, and no one else. Much of the advice that is coming to us from different countries is similar to this. Tell these wiseacres, "I will hear you when you have made a stable society yourselves. You cannot hold on to one idea for two days, you quarrel and fail; you are born like moths in the spring and die like them in five minutes. You come up like bubbles and burst like bubbles too. First form a stable society like ours. First make laws and institutions that remain undiminished in their power through scores of centuries. Then will be the time to talk on the subject with you, but till then, my friend, you are only a giddy child.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 133)

Swami Vivekananda's love for India was unlimited. To him, all India was sacred and wonderful and he defended even Indian manners and customs often while training up his Western disciples :

'The Swami was defiant in the defence of the culture of his people. He was ready to beat down mercilessly any other than a living interest in everything connected with the people of his land and thundered against anything that sounded like patronizing. He would turn upon the Western disciples if they were guilty of stupid criticism. He demanded that they should come to the task of the understanding of India without prepossessions and with sincerity, and that India must be understood in the light of the spiritual vision. He upset any notion they might have had as to his country being either old or effete, and he often said that only a youthful nation could so readily have assimilated the ideals of a foreign culture. He made them see India, in the light of its ideals and ideas, as young, vital and powerful, as one throughout in the religious vision. He made them see that India's culture was incomparable, being developed through thousands of years of trial and experimentation till it had attained the highest standard ever reached by humanity, and consequently possessed an unshakable stability and strength. He made them see the *why* of every Indian custom. And they saw that though India was poor, it was clean and that poverty was honoured in the land where religion was understood to be renunciation, and that here poverty was not necessarily associated with vice, as it is so often in the West. To the Swami all India was sacred and wonderful. And later on as he wandered with his disciples from city to city and province to province, he would recount to them the glories and the beauties of the land. The Swami was anxious that his Western disciples should make an impartial study of Indian problems. They were not only to see the glories, but also to have especially a clear understanding of the problems of the land and bring the ideals and methods of West-

ern scientific culture to bear upon the task of finding a solution.' (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*: by His Eastern and Western Disciples, pp. 553-554)

Swami Vivekananda was fully conscious of the merits of the Western ideal but he wanted India to retain her feet firm on the ground of her own idea and then learn the useful things from other nations. Like his Master, he was a great harmonizer. He wanted the combination of the best of the West and the East, of materialism and spirituality, of action and contemplation. So he said:

'We talk foolishly against material civilization. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishly for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualization of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mohammedans? It was due to the Hindus' ignorance of material civilization... Material civilization, nay, even luxury is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God, who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody! Our young fools organize meetings to get more power from the English. They only laugh. None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, p. 368)

Education

In bringing in the regeneration of India, Swami Vivekananda put the maximum emphasis on training and education. Education is the pivot of Swami Viveka-

nanda's idea of reform. 'Education is the panacea for all social evils', he used to say. So in trying to improve the lot of the socially oppressed, he was not enamoured of the prevalent social reforms, for they were only surface reforms. He wanted to go deeper and bring in a total change in their outlook and thus root out the cause of degeneration. And what was the method for bringing in that total change which removes all dullness, makes men aware of a higher and better life? It was education. He wrote:

'Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education, faith in one's own self, and through faith in one's own self the inherent Brahman is waking up in them while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant.'

'In New York I used to observe the Irish colonists come,—down-trodden, haggard-looking destitute of all possessions at home, penniless and wooden-headed,—with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. A different spectacle in six months,—the man walks upright, his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of fright. What is the cause? Our Vedānta says that that Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country—the whole of nature was telling him with one voice,—“Pat, you have no more hope, you are born a slave and will remain so.” Having been thus told from his birth, Pat believed in it and hypnotised himself that he was very low, and the Brahman in him shrank away. While no sooner had he landed in America than he heard the shout going up

on all sides,—“Pat, you are a man as we are, it is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything: have courage!” Pat raised his head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up, nature herself spoke, as it were,—“Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.” (*Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems*, Compiled by Swami Nirvedananda, pp. 68-69)

Education in its turn makes the mind free from all superstitions and hypnosis before tyranny and oppression and so freedom was his spiritual goal as well as prescription for social upliftment.

Educate and give liberty was his prescription for the masses. He said:

‘The chief cause of India’s ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it by spreading education among the masses.’ (*Swami Vivekananda: Education*, p. 69)

‘Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a *mahātman* (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *durātman* (wicked soul) . . . So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages! (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, p. 58)

Qualities to imbibe

On various occasions, Swami Viveka-

nanda recommended various qualities for the all round development of social workers. But these same qualities are to be implanted in all the members of society. So he spoke about the development of strength, confidence, faith, zeal, fearlessness and other qualities. The first and foremost duty of a social worker is to rouse self respect, zeal and enthusiasm in the people. Details of social activities will then very easily be looked after. To do that man must be made aware of the infinite source of energy lying within him. Divinity of the self is to be preached first. Every other thing that human beings need, such as economic rehabilitation and so on, should be offered only after the human mind has been flooded with the idea of man’s true being.

For service, Swami Vivekananda visualized two types of workers, monastic and lay, both having purity of character, perfect unselfishness, tremendous missionary zeal and a higher spiritual outlook. Monks are specially to be trained to live and preach the universal religion of Vedānta in foreign countries as well as in India. The Indian work of monks will have a bias for service, physical, intellectual and spiritual. The lay workers will specially serve in the so-called secular fields. He did not consider sacred and secular service to be different. Sister Nivedita nicely puts in her *Religion and Dharma* that the grand ideal of *sannyāsa* should be practised in civic life too. Scientists, executives, social and political workers, all should have the social application of *sannyāsa* by practising detachment with zeal and determination coupled with complete unselfishness.

Since Swami Vivekananda wanted specially the youth to serve the nation, he asked them to build up a strong body and an equally strong character. He said, ‘It is character that pays everywhere.’ ‘Men, believing young men, sincere to the back-

bone are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionized.'

To be a true reformer, he said, three things are necessary. 'The first to feel; do you really feel for your brothers? ... Are you full of that idea of sympathy? If you are, that is only the first step. You must think next if you have found any remedy. The old ideas may be all superstition—but in and around these masses of superstition are nuggets of gold and truth. Have you discovered means by which to keep the gold alone, without any of the dross? One more thing is necessary. What is your motive? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed of gold, by thirst for fame or power?' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 158-159)

'Renunciation and service are the national ideals of India', said Swami Vivekananda. He wanted national workers to develop this spirit. 'The essential thing is renunciation—without renunciation none can pour his whole heart in working for others. The man of renunciation sees all with an equal eye, and devotes himself to the service of all. Nothing will be able to resist truth and love and sincerity.' (*Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems: Compiled by Swami Nirvedananda*, p. 83)

Strength

Strength was a special message of Swami Vivekananda. It was a central principle round which he gathered his ideas. It was he who gave the famous equation, 'Strength is religion, religion is strength.' Strength is the watchword of our scriptures. Quoting the *Kāṭha Upaniṣad*, he exhorted them to be 'optimistic, strong, firm and intelligent'. Strength is necessary, for it gives ability to follow a programme.

'Weakness is sin', he said. Inhumanity and selfishness are born of weakness. 'We lie, steal, kill and commit other crimes because we are weak.' In his enthusiasm,

he dramatically said that playing football is better than reading the *Gītā*. He did not want India to be militarily weak, though he was proud of India which never went out to conquer. His exhortation of strength was not a glorification of mere force or violence. It is not destructive. It is for making peace. 'I have always spoken of strength, not of revenges', he said.

The other factor in the composition of the strength of his idea is the intellectual power. Education is not the collection of information but liberation of inexhaustible inner potentialities of man. But, of course, the unfailing abiding source of strength is the Ātman and spiritual strength. It is a tremendous ethical force generating harmony and inspiring heroic self-sacrifice. His ideals for the people of India were strength, courage, fearlessness and service with the Lord at the centre of all work. These characterize true manhood. Manliness, according to him, is the whole of piety. To follow strength and fearlessness in all circumstances is manliness. It is to uphold whatever is true and uplifting. This is *dharma*. This is righteousness. To act manly was the agitation of the moment too.

As a Vedāntin, he knew that real strength lies in the Self. The body has its limitations, the mind, too, is not paramount. But it is the Ātman which is the repository of all strength, all hope, all energy. By attuning oneself to the Self, one could gain strength, hope and energy. That is why he exhorted his followers to spread this message of the glory of the Ātman from door to door.

Self-confidence is the one virtue he wanted his countrymen to imbibe. It was necessary for the progressive and the backward, for the educated and the ignorant, for the rich and the poor. In trying to assert self-confidence, even if a man became

proud, Vivekananda would not mind. He went further in his passionate moments. Sister Nivedita mentions him saying : 'Yes ! the older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new gospel. Do even evil like a man ! Be wicked, if you must, on a grand scale !'

An important aspect of real strength, of manliness, is the capacity to face the problems of life. He was all for fighting Nature, for all progress in civilization came through it. He said :

'It is rebellion against Nature, struggle for self-preservation, that differentiates Spirit from Matter. Where there is life, there is struggle, there is the manifestation of the Spirit. Read the history of all nations and you will find that that is the Law. It is only this nation which drifts with Nature, and you are more dead than alive. You are in a hypnotized state. For the last thousand years or more, you are told that you are weak, you are nobodies, you are good for nothing and so on, and you have come to believe yourself as such.' (*Life of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit., pp. 490-491)

'At one time, before the trip to Amarnath, when someone had asked him, "Sire ! what should we do when we see the strong oppress the weak ?" he had made reply. "Why, thrash the strong, of course !" "Even forgiveness", he said on a similar occasion, "if weak and passive, is not true : fight is better. *Forgive* when you can bring legions of angels to an easy victory... The world is a battle field, fight your way out." Another asked him, "Swamiji, ought one to die in defence of right, or ought one to learn never to react ?" "I am for no reaction". replied the Swami slowly, and after a long pause added, "—for *sannyāsins*. Self-defence for the householder !" ' (ibid., pp. 593-594)

Gandhiji has popularized the idea of non-violence being applied in national life.

Swami Vivekananda was all for sacrifice which is a higher virtue, but still he exhorted the youth of India to cultivate the qualities suitable for a competitive life. He said : 'Darwin's theory is applicable to the animal and vegetable kingdoms, but not to the human kingdom where reason and knowledge are highly developed. In our saints and ideal men we find no trace of struggle whatsoever, and no tendency to rise higher or grow stronger by the destruction of others. There we find sacrifice instead. The more one can sacrifice the greater is he. The struggle of a rational man is with his internal nature. The more he succeeds in controlling the mind the greater is he. On being questioned, "Why then do you emphasize so much on the need of our physical improvement ?"—the Swami thundered : "Are you men ? You are no better than animals, satisfied with eating, sleeping and propagating, and haunted by fear ! If you had not had in you a little rationality, you would have been turned into quadrupeds by this time ! Devoid of self-respect, you are full of jealousy among yourselves, and have made yourselves objects of contempt to foreigners ! Throw aside your vain bragging (your theories and so forth, and reflect calmly on the doings and dealings of your everyday life. Because you are governed by animal nature, therefore I teach you to seek for success first in the struggle for existence, and to attend to the building up of your physique, so that you shall be able to wrestle all the better with your mind. The physically weak. I say again and again, are unfit for the realization of the Self ! When once the mind is controlled and man is the master of his self, it does not matter whether the body remains strong or not, for then he is not dominated by it." ' (ibid., pp. 615-616)

It shows that he was aware of the higher ideal and wanted the best among us to practise it. From a philosophical height

of detachment, he viewed the Indian method as fightlessness. 'You are quite wrong', he said again, 'when you think that fighting is a sign of growth. It is not so at all. Absorption is the sign. Hinduism is the very genius of absorption. We have never cared for fighting. Of course we could strike a blow now and then, in defence of our homes! That was right. But we never cared for fighting for its own sake. Everyone had to learn that. So let these races of new comers whirl on! They'll all be taken into Hinduism in the end!' (ibid., p. 651)

A very important aspect of 'facing Nature' is to cultivate the restraint of the senses. It is not the strength and freedom that make one glide along easy and unprincipled path that is ultimately beneficial to the individual and the society. So mastery over the mind and the senses must be acquired and the power of deep concentration must be developed. So he said:

'Herein is the difference between man and the animals—man has the greater power of concentration. The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. This is the only difference.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. VI, p. 37)

'How has all the knowledge in the world been gained but by the concentration of the powers of the mind? The world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give it the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow come through concentration. There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point; that is the secret.' (ibid., Vol. I, pp. 130-31)

Fearlessness is the one quality, Swami Vivekananda liked to see in the youth of the country. It is the greatest glory of the

Upaniṣads, that they visualized the highest Reality as *Abhayam*, fearlessness itself.

Faith is the other most important quality which Swami Vivekananda wanted our people to imbibe. The Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* are full of praise for cultivating this faith. 'Whatever one's faith so one is', says the Upaniṣad. 'A man of faith gets knowledge', says the *Gītā*. So he said:

'Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God—this is the secret of greatness. If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what we need.' (ibid., Vol. III, p. 190)

As Goethe puts it, 'Give me the benefit of your convictions, if you have any, but keep your doubts to yourself, for I have enough of my own.' The world wants to hear a man of conviction and if that conviction is based on his realization of man's fundamental nature, his appeal becomes irresistible. That is the secret of Swami Vivekananda's tremendous impact on scores of people in the country and outside. 'All the scholastic scaffolding falls', said Napoleon, 'as a ruined edifice, before one single word—faith.'

Swami Vivekananda exhorted even the newly ordained monks to have faith and set themselves to the service of fellow men:

To them, he said, 'Be fearless, be ready, from today, to lay down your life for your own *Mokṣa* and for the good of others.' (*Life of Swami Vivekananda*, op. cit, p. 500)

Monks are to be ideal workers and other social workers, too, must practise the virtue of detachment. 'Again and again he would say that only a great monk can be a great worker. "Only the unimpas-

sioned and unattached do most for the world" he would say. "Who can claim to be a greater worker than Buddha or Christ?" In the Swami's eyes there was no work which was secular. All work was sacred. All work was worship. "We must combine the practicality and the culture of the finest citizenship with the love of poverty, purity and thorough renunciation that characterize the true monk and man of God!" (ibid., p. 625)

Society

Swami Vivekananda was as much a sociologist as a religious teacher. In one of his letters to a lady-disciple, we get glimpses of his ideas on the origin of custom, widow-remarriage, liberty and the psychology of religious consciousness. In it, he writes:

'*R̥ṣi*, *Muni* or God—none has the power to force an institution on society. When the needs of the times press hard on it, society adopts certain customs for self-preservation. *R̥ṣis* have only recorded those customs. As a man often resorts even to such means as are good for immediate self-protection, but which are very injurious in the future, so also, society not infrequently saves itself for the time being, but these immediate means which contributed to its preservation turn out to be terrible in the long run.'

'For example, take the prohibition of widow-marriage in our country. Don't think that *R̥ṣis* or wicked men introduced the law pertaining to it. Notwithstanding the desire of men to keep women completely under their control, they never could succeed in introducing those laws without betaking themselves to the aid of a social necessity of the time.'

Similar is the case with the caste system, and other social customs.

'So, if it be necessary to change any social custom, the necessity underlying it should be found out first of all; and by

altering it the custom will die of itself. Otherwise, no good will be done by condemnation or praise.'

'Liberty', said Swami Vivekananda, 'does not certainly mean the absence of obstacles in the path of misappropriation of wealth etc. by you and me, but it is our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence or wealth according to our will, without doing harm to others; and all the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education, or knowledge...'

'Who constitute society? The millions, or you, I, and a few others of the upper classes?'

'"Raise self by self." Let each one work out one's own salvation. It is freedom in every way, i.e. advance towards *Mukti* is the worthiest gain of man. To advance towards freedom—physical, mental and spiritual—and help others to do so is the supreme prize of man. Those social rules which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom are injurious, and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily. Those institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the path of freedom.' (ibid., p. 618-20)

His concept of service led him to a concept of society which was the fore-runner of socialist thoughts in India. He was a socialist, 'not because it is a perfect system, but because half a loaf is better than no bread. The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried—if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing.' But he was not a socialist in the ordinary sense of the term, for he was anxious for all round welfare to retain the spiritual values.

He wanted the combination of all that is best in every old social group. He wrote, 'If it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest, the culture of the militia, the distributive spirit

of the commercial, and the ideal of equality of the rest can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state.' He thought of harmonizing the two special characteristic of the two important communities of India, the social equality of the Muslims and the thinking faculty of the Hindus and would fondly express this idea with the expression, 'Islamic body and Vedāntic brain'. He feared that in the age of the common man there may be lowering of cultural standards. So he wanted abolition of privileges and voluntary sharing of the enjoyable goods of life. It is not merely equal opportunities, it is giving an extra consideration to the poor and the down-trodden. 'Our Mission', he said, 'is for the destitute, the poor and the illiterate peasantry, and labouring classes; and if after everything has been done for them first, there is spare time, then only for the gentry.' (Swami Vivekananda: *Caste, Culture and Socialism*, pp. 84-92)

In social reform, he did not believe in condemnation or in sudden change. Growth is always gradual. 'Take a man from where he stands and from there give him a lift.'

Masses

Swami Vivekananda was one of the earliest leaders who thought about improving the lot of the masses, for it is they who are the backbone of society. So he wrote in a letter:

'Preach the idea of elevating the masses by means of a central college, and bringing education as well as religion to the door of the poor by means of missionaries trained in this college. Suppose some disinterested *sannyāsins*, bent on doing good to others go from village to village, disseminating education, and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the *Caṇḍāla*, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such

other accessories,—can't that bring forth good in time?' (Swami Vivekananda on *India and Her Problems*, op. cit., p. 72)

'Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion." Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas! nobody ever did anything for them...Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? can you become an Occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, working energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, pp.29-30)

He exhorted our young men to render service to their fellowmen. In one of his letters written from America, he wrote to Alasinga Perumal, 'Trust not to the so-called rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you—in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful. Have faith in the Lord; no policy, it is nothing. Feel for the miserable and look up for help—it shall come. I have travelled twelve years with this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from door to door of the so-called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I have crossed half the world to this strange land seeking for help. The Lord is great. I know He will help me. I may perish of cold or hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.'

'It is not the work of a day', he wrote further, 'and the path is full of the most deadly thorns. But Pārthasārathi is ready to be our *Sārathi*, we know that; and in His name and with eternal faith in Him, set fire to the mountain of misery that has been heaped upon India for ages—and it shall be burned down. Come then, look it in the face, brethren, it is a grand task

and we are so low. But we are the sons of Light and children of God. Glory unto the Lord, we will succeed.' (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 70-71)

What are his ideas about mass contact which is a popular slogan now? Swami Vivekananda's exhortation to his educated countrymen was full of suggestions for mass communication. For that, qualified workers are of utmost importance. They must be strong, vigorous, believing young-men, fired with the ideal and armed with the spirit of sacrifice and selflessness. The content of this education will be secular as well as spiritual knowledge. For that, he wanted to set in motion a machinery that would bring noble ideas to the door of everybody. The villagers have to be taught hygiene etc. and they also must be conversant with the cultural heritage and also the day-to-day happenings. Education will be best, if it is given through religion. The medium should be the vernaculars. Education should be given orally by telling stories, history etc. and occasionally through different village theatrical programmes. Globes, charts, posters etc. have to be profusely used. Swami Vivekananda was one of the earliest thinkers to suggest the use of modern methods including the audio-visual. He wanted the talks to be simple, interesting and indirect. The teachers must go to the villagers instead of expecting the villagers to come to them. As a technique, they must know how to come down to the level of the villagers. This is a tremendous task. But this is a duty. This is their debt to the community.

Caste

Pursuing his concept of service, Swami Vivekananda devoted himself to discussing the burning questions of the masses, of the caste system and of women. The underlying principles of social organizations have to be understood before a social pro-

gramme is evolved. To him, caste in its broad sense of division was a universal phenomenon. It is in the nature of things that societies will be divided into groups. When they are crystallized and become hereditary, they are called castes. Mr. Packard in his well-known book *The Status Seekers* cites examples of hereditary stratification of professions from American business world. In many countries, it is money, instead of heredity, that brings in the division. In modern society, we take an individual as a unit whereas in India a community embodied in caste was accepted as a unit. A man, though not free to go up the ladder alone, could do so along with the group. He pointed out :

'The law of caste in every other country takes the individual man or woman the sufficient unit. Wealth, power, intellect or beauty suffices for the individual to leave the status of birth and scramble up to anywhere he can. Here the unit is all the members of a caste community. Here too, one has every chance of rising from a low caste to a higher or to the highest; only, in this birth-land of altruism, one is compelled to take his whole caste along with him. In India, you cannot on account of your wealth, power or any other merit, leave your fellows behind and make common cause with your superiors. If you want to rise to a higher caste in India, you have to elevate all your caste first, and then there is nothing in your onward path to hold you back.'

The caste system served the Indian society well in times of need by providing it a great measure of stability. 'No doubt,' says Sydney Law in his *Vision of India* about *cāturvarṇa* 'that it is the main cause of the fundamental stability and contentment by which Indian society has been braced up for centuries against the shock of politics and the cataclysms of nature.'

While Swami Vivekananda thus defend-

ed the original purpose of the caste system, he denounced the abuses into which it had fallen. The crystallized, hereditary caste system of the present day, the 'don't touchism', received its strongest condemnation at his hands. But he believed in levelling up rather than levelling down. 'The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher.' 'The only way to bring about the levelling of castes is to appropriate the culture, the education, which is the strength of the higher castes.'

In trying to remove the evils of social differences, Swami Vivekananda was against all strife, for that will weaken the nation. So he said :

'Therefore, it is no use fighting among the castes. What good will it do? It will divide us all the more, weaken us all the more, degrade us all the more. The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher. And that is the line of work that is found in all our books, in spite of what you may hear from some people whose knowledge of their own scriptures and whose capacity to understand the mighty plans of the ancients are only zero. What is the plan? The ideal at one end is the Brāhmaṇa and the ideal at the other end is the Caṇḍāla, and the whole work is to raise the Caṇḍāla up to the Brāhmaṇa. Slowly and slowly you find more and more privileges granted to them.' (*Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems*, op.cit., p. 84)

Swami Vivekananda was against class-war. Instead, he wanted to bring out the best qualities of the higher and privileged castes and classes. He was not prepared to denounce the forward groups for their progress.

While describing the role of Brāhmaṇa, he said : 'It is true he was the earliest preacher to the Indian races, he was the

first to renounce everything in order to attain to the higher realization of life, before others could reach to the idea. It was not his fault that he marched ahead of the other castes. Why did not the other castes so understand and do as they did? Why did they sit down and be lazy, and let the Brāhmaṇas win the race?' (ibid., p. 86-87)

'But it is one thing' he said, 'to gain an advantage, and another thing to preserve it for evil use. Whenever power is used for evil it becomes diabolical; it must be used for good only. So this accumulated culture of ages of which the Brāhmaṇa has been the trustee, he must now give to the people at large, and it was because he did not give it to the people, that the Mohammedan invasion was possible. It was because he did not open this treasury to the people from the beginning, that for a thousand years we have been trodden under the heels of every one who chose to come to India; it was through that we have become degraded, and the first task must be to break open the cells that hide the wonderful treasures which our common ancestors accumulated; bring them out, and give them to everybody, and the Brāhmaṇa must be the first to do it. There is an old superstition in Bengal that if the cobra that bites, sucks out his own poison from the patient, the man must survive. Well then, the Brāhmaṇa must suck out his own poison.' (ibid)

What Swami Vivekananda wanted is the abolition of all privileges based on caste. He went further in his lectures on 'Privilege' and 'Vedānta and Privilege' and said that all types of privileges based on birth, health, education and spirituality are based on tyranny and exploitation. So he said :

'It is in the nature of society to form itself into groups; and what will go will be - these privileges! Caste is a natural

order. I can perform one duty in social life, and you another; you can govern a country, and I can mend a pair of old shoes, but that is no reason why you are greater than I, for can you mend my shoes? Can I govern the country? I am clever in mending shoes, you are clever in reading Vedas, that is no reason why you should trample on my head; why if one commits murder should he be praised and if another steals an apple why should he be hanged? This will have to go.' (ibid., p. 79-80)

If at all privileges are necessary, the balance must tilt towards the backward. So he said:

'If the Brahmin has more aptitude for learning on the grounds of heredity than the Pariah, spend no money on the Brahmin's education, but spend all on the Pariah. Give to the weak, for there all the gift is needed; If the Brahmin is born clever, he can educate himself without help. ... This is justice and reason as I understand it.' (ibid., p. 82-83)

The philosophy of Vedānta can give back people their lost self-respect if properly cultivated.

'Each Hindu, I say, is a brother to every other, and it is we, who have degraded them by our outcry, "Don't touch", "Don't touch"! And so the whole country has been plunged to the utmost depths of meanness, cowardice and ignorance. These men have to be lifted; words of hope and faith have to be proclaimed to them. We have to tell them, "You are also men like us and you have all the rights that we have".' (ibid)

Women

In trying to define the national ideal and suggesting remedies for social evils, Swami Vivekananda's attention was naturally drawn to the plight of women. He wanted their progress, for the progress of a nation depends upon the progress of its

women. He wrote about the imperative need of women's progress in the following way:

'All nations have attained greatness, by paying proper respect to the women. That country and that nation which do not respect the women have never become great, nor will ever be in future. The principal reason why your race has so much degenerated is that you had no respect for these living images of Śakti. Manu says, "Where women are respected there the gods delight; and where they are not, there all works and efforts come to naught." (*Manu-Samhitā* III. 56) There is no hope of rise for that family or country where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness.' (ibid., p. 95)

Again he wrote: 'Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you remain as backward as you are now. The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses, must come first, and then only can any real good come about for the country, for India. If the women are raised, then their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country—then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country.' (ibid., p. 95) But he cautioned that we should not judge their condition through the eyes of others having different standards of morality and outlook on life.

'We should not allow the sudden influx of European criticism, and our consequent sense of contrast, to make us acquiesce too readily in the notion of the inequality of our women. Circumstances have forced upon us, for many centuries, the woman's need of protection. This and not her inferiority, is the true reading of our customs. Could anything be more complete than the equality of boys and girls in our old forest universities? Read our Sanskrit dramas—read the story of Śakuntalā, and

see if Tennyson's "Princess" has anything to teach us !'

Again : 'In Malabar the women lead in everything. Exceptional cleanliness is apparent everywhere and there is the greatest impetus to learning. When I myself was in that country, I met many women who spoke good Sanskrit, while in the rest of India not one woman in a million can speak it. Mastery elevates and servitude debases. Malabar has never been conquered either by the Portuguese, or by the Mussalmans. The Dravidians were a non-Aryan race of Central Asia, who preceded the Aryans, and those of Southern India were the most civilized. Women with them stood higher than men.' (ibid., p. 92-93)

But women's position deteriorated and betterment of their lot was necessary. Regarding this, his view was that women must be given education and then 'let them decide their future'. He would, however, like the ideal of Sītā to be kept up. 'The women of India must grow and develop in the foot-prints of Sītā, and that is the only way'. He was enamoured of the Sītā ideal and said :

'Sītā is the very type of the true Indian woman, for, all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sītā ; and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman, and child, through the length and breadth of the land of Āryāvarta ... All our mythology may vanish, even our Vedas may depart, and our Sanskrit language may vanish for ever, but so long as there will be five Hindus living here, even if only speaking the most vulgar *patois*, there will be the story of Sītā present, mark my words. Sītā has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in the blood of every Hindu man and woman ; we are all children of Sītā.' (ibid., p. 89)

'I know', he further continues, 'that the race that produced Sītā—even if it only dreamt of her—has a reverence for woman that is unmatched on the earth. There is many a burden bound with legal tightness on the shoulders of Western woman that is utterly unknown to ours. We have our wrongs and our exceptions certainly, but so have they.' (ibid., p. 91)

What should be the type of education for girls? Swami Vivekananda casually mentions some : 'History and the Purāṇas, religion, arts, science, house-keeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene—the simple essential points in these subjects ought to be taught to our women. It is not good to let them touch novels and fiction. But only teaching rites of worship won't do ; their education must be an eye-opener in all matters. Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with a devotion to lofty principles of selflessness. The noble example of Sītā, Sāvitrī, Damayantī, Līlāvatī, Khanā and Mīrā should be brought home to their minds and they should be inspired to mould their own lives, in the light of these. Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi ! With such an education women will solve their own problems.'

'We must see to their growing up as ideal matrons of home in time. The children of such mothers will make further progress in the virtues that distinguish the mother. It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men are born.'

'Studying the present needs of the age, it seems imperative to train some of them up in the ideals of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of lifelong virginity, fired with the strength of that vir-

tue of chastity which is innate in their life-blood, from hoary antiquity. Along with that they should be taught sciences and other things which would be of benefit, not only to them but to others as well, and knowing this they would easily learn these things and feel pleasure in doing so. Our motherland requires for her well-being some of her children to become such pure-souled *brahmacārīṇis*.' (ibid., p. 97-99)

Exhortation

Thus, freeing men from the tyranny of hierarchical, hereditary caste and levelling them up, amelioration of sufferings wherever they are, betterment of women, defence of the weak and uplifting the masses to build a radiant society, reconstructing India through 'the development of industry', 'improved methods of agriculture which is the noblest profession' and all possible help from the West in science and technology—all these were included in Swami Vivekananda's concept of social service. He gave the basic ideas, the detailed work was left to the workers. But service has to be undertaken not as levers to power or fame or for a name in history but as service to God Himself to satisfy the yearning of the soul. When one takes up service in this spirit, one can be free from the aberrations that would, otherwise, vitiate the endeavour. This is spirituality. This is practical Vedānta. After explaining the system of Vedānta in his famous Lahore Lecture, Swami Vivekananda exhorts young men to practise this practical spirituality. He said:

'Raise once more that mighty banner of

Advaita, for on no other ground can you have that wonderful love, until you see that the same Lord is present everywhere. Unfurl the banner of love! "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached." Arise, arise once more, for nothing can be done without renunciation. If you want to help others, your little self must go... Your ancestors gave up the world for doing great things. At the present time there are men who give up the world to help their own salvation. Throw away everything, even your own salvation, and go and help others. Ay, you are always talking bold words, but here is practical Vedānta before you. Give up this little life of yours. What matters it if you die of starvation—you and I and thousands like us—so long as this nation lives? The nation is sinking, the curse of unnumbered millions is on our heads, those to whom we have been giving ditch-water to drink when they have been dying of thirst and while the perennial river of water was flowing past, the unnumbered millions whom we have allowed to starve in sight of plenty, the unnumbered millions to whom we have talked of Advaita and whom we have hated with all our strength, the unnumbered millions for whom we have invented the doctrine of *Lokācāra* (usage), to whom we have talked theoretically that we are all the same and all are one with the same Lord, without even an ounce of practice. "Yet, my friends, it must be only in the mind and never in practice!" Wipe off this blot. Arise and awake." (The Complete Works, Vol. III, pp. 430-31)

REFLECTIONS ON HINDUISM AND CONTEMPORARY INDIA

PROFESSOR DONALD H. BISHOP

India today faces two great challenges. One concerns ends, the other means. India must decide what ends she shall give priority to and what means she shall use to achieve them. Hinduism is concerned with both, for it holds that only certain ends are desirable and only certain means should be used to reach them. In analyzing contemporary India, we shall deal with two questions. What ends is India actually pursuing and what means is she using, and, from a Hindu point of view, are these the ends she should seek and the means she should use?

As a visitor to India, I was struck by the great emphasis being placed upon material goals. One can understand and sympathize with this. India is termed one of the underdeveloped or 'have not' nations. It is true that the per capita food consumption, the average amount of goods purchased per person, the amenities of life enjoyed by each individual is lower than in the 'have' nations of the West. A discussion of the causes is unnecessary. The significant fact is that the masses in India are aware that people in other countries have a higher standard of life and they are becoming determined to have the same for themselves. Is this not to be expected? When Indian people see pictures in *Life* magazine of the elegant refrigerators, sewing machines, automobiles and homes in America, is it not natural for them to want such things also?

What does Hinduism say about this? One answer is to point to the model for life Hinduism offered India many centuries ago. That paradigm centered around the concepts of the fourfold object of life (*kāma*, *artha*, *dharma*, *mokṣa*) and the four stages of life (Brahmacarya, Gārhasthya, Vānaprastha, Sannyāsa). According to this ideal, what

every person rightfully seeks is the fulfilment of the emotional life, the life of material well being, the virtuous life and the spiritual life. Our emotions are not to be suppressed. It is not wrong to desire a suitable level of material goods. Our lives must be lived in an ethical framework, however, and ultimately one is led out of the material into the spiritual. There are four stages of life, one flowing into the other. In the first, one learns about life; he next experiences it fully, and then gradually leaves it behind to live the life of the spirit. We recognize, of course, that this is the ideal and that only a few reach it. Not everyone can become a wandering *sannyāsin* but those who do are examples for the rest inspiring them to reach the ideal as fully as possible wherever they are.

Hinduism then does not deny Indian people's aspirations for a better life. As Dr. Radhakrishnan once noted, 'There never was in India a national ideal of poverty and squalor.' Hinduism recognizes that for the vast majority it is difficult to be religious when one's stomach is empty. When a person's life is impoverished and one's daily bread is uncertain, religion is at a low ebb. On the other hand Hinduism cautions us in several ways. First, an abundance of things is not in itself a guarantee of either happiness or spirituality. Sometimes suffering and deprivation is more apt to lead a man to such. Secondly, things are not to be pursued as ends in themselves but are to be viewed only as means to non-material ends. The pursuit of material well being should not be an exclusive, an all-dominating and all-absorbing force in one's life. In the third place, the good things of life should not be gained through immoral means, for fruit so reaped will be sour to

the taste and bitter to the stomach. In a materialistic society, the temptation of immoral means is greater, because the ends seem so attractive. Hinduism also affirms that things should not be hoarded or limited to a minority. It supports whatever economic system will lead to a just, equitable distribution of wealth, a society where all have the good things of life and not just a few.

If one is impressed by the importance attached to material goals, one is struck at the same time by two factors in regard to the state of the arts. One is their neglect; the other is the preference given to non-Indian art. The cause of both is obvious. A continuation of many decades of westernization accounts for the latter while the former is the result of the urgent practical problems India faces. Music, drama, poetry, literature mean little to people whose lives are blighted by despair and desparation. The minimum requirements of life must be met before one can appreciate a *sitar* or a sonnet. It is generally agreed that the arts cannot flourish in a society until at least a minimum economic foundation has been established. This takes us to our basic theme, the challenge of ends and means. In the years to come, India's economy will become more firmly established, her people more prosperous. What then? Will India become so engrossed in materialism as to reject the promoting of the arts as a desirable end? Or will her people use that prosperity as a spring board to a fuller life in which man's aesthetic and spiritual sensibilities are developed and perfected? Hinduism is concerned about this, because it holds that work is not an end in itself but is a means to a greater end. We are familiar with the words in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

'You have the right to work, but for the work's sake only. You have no right to the fruits of your work. Desire for the fruits of your work must never be your

motive in working... Perform every action with your heart fixed on the Supreme Lord.'

In the context of this discussion, they say to us that man is an aesthetic being. He is sensitive to beauty, truth, goodness, God. He works on the land, in the office and factory, not just to earn food for his table but, once having done that, to fulfil his aesthetic self. Thus the arts and religion have come into existence that through them man might become a full being. Both an individual and a society are incomplete without them.

Indian art and culture has been highly developed in the past and is now in a period of ascendancy. What means will be used for such a growth? This leads to two questions. One is whether India will allow western art to dominate, or will she develop her own, or will a combination of the two evolve. The second is the place in the arts Hinduism and other religions will have. I could not help but notice and wonder about some evidence of the first which I saw. One was the cheap gangster, cowboy and romance movies from the West and pornographic magazines from the West also. Are these importations to become a part of the cultural diet of the Indian people? Are not the second and third alternatives much better? It would be interesting to see how the best of western and Indian art and culture might be interwoven. As interesting, if not more so, would be to see what might come from further creative endeavours to present in new ways and with new methods that which is unique to Indian life and tradition. Forced as we are more and more to look from a world perspective, is not cultural pluralism what we wish for the world as a whole? The prospect of a single world culture of a blase western type which one sees spreading over the East nowadays is dismal indeed. How much better would

it be to have a world in which varied cultures exist side by side, not competing and trying to out do each other, but each developing and living that which is best in its own tradition as its contribution to the world.

The Hindu rejoices in the growth of culture and the arts. One of his concerns, however, is the nature of that development. Will Hinduism be part of it as it has in the past? What, for example, will happen in the field of literature? Will a 'secular' literature develop which will be the main staple of the people's literary diet? There is a trend in that direction already. What can Hinduism and other religions do about this? The same tendency seems to characterize the cinema whose appeal is too often to the sensual rather than the aesthetic and spiritual, and this concerns Hinduism also.

India must make a clear choice about several other ends. Two of them are education and family life. India is embarking on a massive programme of universal education. Has sufficient consideration been given to its content and goals? There is no doubt Indian education will become more empirically oriented in response to the needs of the times. There will be an increasing emphasis upon science and technology. This will be true in both university and pre-university studies. While Hinduism recognizes the need and value of such, at the same time it is confronted by two questions. Should not the teaching of spiritual or religious values, truths or traditions be a part of general education? If so, how can this be accomplished? While Hinduism must accept the constitutional provision of the 'separation of Church and State', to use western terminology, it is concerned that a purely secular education may lead to a culture bereft of a spiritual and religious base. The second question is whether it is possible for Hinduism to set up an extensive religious education programme for

children and youths outside the schools in which Hindu beliefs can be propagated. There has been progress in this direction already. I was greatly impressed, for example, by the educational activity carried on by Ramakrishna societies I visited in Bangalore, Madras and Calcutta. Should not all Hindus join in a concerted effort to expand such an educational programme if a religiously illiterate culture is to be avoided?

Many Hindus are concerned about this problem, because they realize drastic changes are occurring in Indian family life, one of which is the slackening of religious education in the home. I recall vividly a conversation with a faculty member of the University of Udaipur who told how, as he grew up in his native village, he would listen in the evening to his grandparents, to village elders and priests reciting religious stories and legends. In this way, the Hindu tradition became a part of him. At the same time, he lamented that his children were not having the same or equivalent experience and as a result were not knowledgeable of much that he had learned. As he pointed out, his experience typified many Indian families today. That it will become even more so forces India to face the problem of the effects of changing conditions upon family life. How can family unity be preserved in an increasingly urbanized, industrialized society? The fracturing of family life characterizes such cultures in other parts of the world. Is the same inevitable in India? How can the values of family life be preserved? For centuries the family has been the basic unit in Indian society, transmitting stability and continuity through periods of uncertainty. It must not forsake that role in the future.

One of the most obvious ends India seeks today is greatness. It is alluded to in everyday conversations. It preoccupies journalists. It is the subject of numerous public

speeches. All of this is quite natural and in this India is not different from other nations. She has thrown off the shackles of colonialism and is trying to find her place in the sun. She wants to be an influential nation in the councils of the world. She wants to be recognized and accepted in terms of her own worth. She wants to be free from foreign influence, not dependent economically on others, and able to make her own unfettered choices.

This gives rise to at least two questions. Is greatness *per se* a desirable goal and, what is greatness and how is it achieved? Is greatness a value in and of itself? Is it an end to be sought for its own sake? Does it have some magnetic, intrinsic worth? Should a nation strive for greatness just to be great? Hinduism would say no. It is not an end in itself, and a nation motivated by it is under *Māyā* or illusion. For we are forced to always ask, greatness for what? To what end? For what purpose? In terms of such questions, we see that greatness may not even be an end in itself. We must turn then to the second question and be clear as to the nature of greatness and the means of achieving it.

Ideas of greatness may be reduced to two general types. There are those who associate greatness with such concepts as strength, power, force, might, self expression, persuasion, acquisition, possession, vastness, lavishness, mastery, triumph. By such terms a magnate is one who has extensive wealth, power and influence. A great nation is thought of as one who has large armies and far flung navies. From a second point of view, greatness is related to such attributes as non-demanding, abstaining, non-acquisitive, self-control, moderation, openness, gentleness, unselfishness, non-aggressiveness, non-violence. It is interesting to note that the second category is not the opposite of the first. It does not

include such terms as weakness, passivity, submissiveness, limpid, slavish, supine, flaccid, indecisive, vacillating, defeat. It is neither the first nor its opposite but is beyond both.

One could illustrate the two views of greatness by an analysis of the two words magnatitute and magnanimity. Both come from the same root, the Latin term *magna*, meaning great. Magnatitute refers to largeness of size or extent. Magnanimity however refers to greatness of heart, mind, soul or spirit. The first defines greatness quantitatively, the second qualitatively. It is obvious that Hinduism, like other religions, favours the second category. It can in no wise support the first, especially when it takes an extreme form. Greatness cannot be defined in terms of size. A great nation quantitatively may be a small nation qualitatively. Whether a person or nation is great depends on how it uses its strength, power or wealth, i.e. its magnitude. Hinduism rejects a mathematical quantitative standard, an empirical measurement *per se*, as the only or ultimate measure of greatness in favour of the qualitative one, just as it rejects quantitative, empirical ways of achieving greatness.

I wondered many times when I was in India if she is not accepting the wrong model of greatness, one which we find has infected much of the globe, but whose validity is disproved by our fractured, warring world. Internal intolerance, chauvinistic nationalism, the extremes of wealth and poverty are but three manifestations of such in India. These point not to the virtues of greatness, but their opposite. One regrets that the flame Gandhi lit has waned, for to many in the West he was a symbol of genuine greatness and an example of what India, if she persisted in such, could offer to the world in terms of both means and ends. One is reminded of the question raised in the

is a sort of suddenness in the course of History. But amongst all these theses, cyclic theory is the most popular and old. In the ancient Hindu tradition such terms as *kalpa* and *yuga-cakra* are very common. The Chinese belief in the *yang* and *yin* gives some idea of the cycle. In modern days, there are many who have given their opinion in favour of a cyclical progress of History. Dr. Grace E. Cairns, in a recent book *Philosophy of History*, writes about the cyclical theories that they were prevalent throughout the world in ancient days, for example, in Mesopotamia, in all the Buddhist countries, in Greece and amongst the Muslims.

Pointing out the significance and the popularity of this cyclical theory among the ancient people and their religion, Dr. Cairns further remarked: 'This kind of patterning began very early in the history of human thought with the mythopoeic Pars pro toto through methodological approach common among the ancient thinkers. The repetitions of the cycles of the material cosmos signify the fleeting transience—the ultimate meaninglessness of the world. The individual must escape from the bondage of such a bubble world, ephemeral as the physical body which is its basis, into the spiritual world of the eternity.'

Swami Vivekananda also believed in the cyclical theory of History, and he said in this connexion: 'Another theory in modern times has been presented by several schools, that man's destiny is to go on always improving, always struggling towards but never reaching the goal. This statement, though apparently very nice, is also absurd, because there is no such thing as motion in a straight line. Every motion is in a circle... A straight line, infinitely projected, must end in a circle. Therefore, this idea that the destiny of man is progressing ever forward and forward, and never stopping, is absurd... Because, just as in the

case of electricity the modern theory is that the power leaves the dynamo and completes the circle back to the dynamo, so with hate and love; they must come back to the source.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 195-196)

Love and hate are the two opposites that stir the History in its cyclic process by a sort of collusion between them. Swami Vivekananda said: 'This whole universe is a case of lost balance. All motion is the struggle of the disturbed universe to regain its equilibrium, which, as such, cannot be motion. Thus in regard to the internal world, it would be a state which is beyond thought, for thought itself is a motion. Now when all indication is towards perfect equilibrium by expansion and the whole universe is rushing towards it, we have no right to say that that state can never be attained. Again it is impossible that there should be any variety whatsoever in that state of equilibrium... Therefore this state of equilibrium is one of unity, of rest, and of homogeneity.' (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 156) And according to him, this process of homogeneity is a process of love. When History falls back from this ideal, war and hate overcome man. Empedocles, an early Greek thinker, can also be referred in this connexion. He made a similar attempt to explain love and hate as the process running through all. In modern times, Sorokin also referred to a kind of power of love and hate in his study of History and society. He, too, contributed towards the cyclic theory. Spengler's bipartite division of History into woman's history and man's history describes the same idea.

Observing the static and the dynamic swing in the cyclic progress of History, Swami Vivekananda said: 'There come periods in the history of the human race when, as it were, whole nations are seized with a sort of world-weariness, when they find that all their plans are slipping between

their fingers, that old institutions and systems are crumbling into dust, that their hopes are all blighted, and everything seems to be out of joint. Two attempts have been made in the world to found social life; the one was upon religion, and the other was upon social necessity. The one was founded upon spirituality, the other upon materialism... Curiously enough, it seems that at times the spiritual side prevails, and then the materialistic side—in wavelike motions following each other. In the same country there will be different tides. At one time the full flood of materialistic ideas prevails, and everything in this life—prosperity, the education which procures more pleasure, more food—will become glorious at first and then, that will degrade and degenerate. Along with the prosperity will rise to white heat all the inborn jealousies and hatreds of the human race.’ (ibid., Vol. III, pp. 156-57) These two trends, namely, the cyclic rest and change, the spirituality and materiality, can be compared with ‘*history as flow*’ and ‘*history as made*’, the twin ideas of Spengler.

The point is therefore that every action of history has got its opposite reaction. There is rise and fall. For Swami Vivekananda himself says that there is no progress without corresponding regression. ‘In one society there is one set of evils, in another, another. So with the period of history. In the middle ages, there were more robbers, now more cheats. At one period there is less idea of married life, at another prostitution. In one, more physical agony, in another a thousand more mental.’

Explaining further these waves of history that recur and repeat, Swami Vivekananda observed: ‘Rest is followed by change—the universe. But that rest must have been preceded by other changes, and this change will be succeeded by other rests. It would be ridiculous to think that there was a period of rest and then came this change

which will go on for ever. Every particle in nature shows that it is coming again and again to periodic rest and change.’ (ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 157) It is this conception of periodic rest and change that is similar to the concept of *yang* and *yin*—the *destructive* and the *constructive* forces of history, described in the Chinese mythology.

Swami Vivekananda’s conception of hate and love and his analogy of dynamo and its power, already put forward above, can be studied with reference to the thoughts of Sorokin. Sorokin gave a philosophic treatment to this necessity of human love. But Swami Vivekananda sanctified it with divine interpretation. The steps of Sorokin are from unconscious to bio-conscious and then to socio-conscious and finally the supra-conscious level of saints. The supra-conscious level is the *sāttvika* level about which Swami Vivekananda also spoke so much. In Sorokin’s language: ‘Altruistic love is the central value of the supra-conscious level.’ For it is only universal, perennial, and infinitely creative force that integrates the vast multitude into one unified system of construction. In Swami Vivekananda’s teaching also, there is a strong emphasis on such altruistic-divine love. He, too, spoke of a spiritual fraternity between man and man. Instead of the term ‘altruistic’, he mostly used the word ‘selfless’—selfless love. Love is the only criterion in his philosophy of Humanism, and service to man is the one great call that he has given to his fellowmen. According to him, love is an important guiding factor of civilization. Love is not merely divine. It is also a human necessity, too, as Huxley has said in his *Brave New World* that love is as necessary as food and shelter. Swami Vivekananda urged not only this human necessity, but also its divine necessity as the foremost.

Some of the sources of this cycle theory of history that attracted Swami Vivekananda

can be found out from his own statements. In one place he writes, 'We read in the *Mahābhārata* that the whole world was in the beginning peopled with Brahmins, and that as they began to degenerate they became divided into different castes, and that when the cycle turns round they will all go back to that Brahminical origin.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, pp. 197-198)

It seems though he claimed a process of unity—a homogeneous progress, he did not mean it to be a singular cyclic process like the other monists or absolutists. History has so many wheels or circles, and various are the movements of History. Therefore, he spoke of many cycles. For example, 'Three cycles of Buddhism were five hundred years of the Law, five hundred years of images and five hundred years of Tantras.' (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 265)

The common criticism against the cyclical theory is—Time is unreal if History is purely cyclical, for if the future is a mere repetition of the past then these future events are really the past events. It is said again that Time loses its temporality—it becomes less real, if it is a moving image of eternity, if History is a continual repetition of the same timeless ideas or forms.

Naturally, the whole issue turns into a metaphysics of time, which it is not possible here to deal with. But already it has been said that History is not time. It is not equivalent to time even. It is a process from here to eternity. It is timeless both at its source and everywhere. But no doubt it manifests itself or appears on the screen of

Time. Time-consciousness is a human accompaniment. We read History in time. Yet, History is not repetition in so far as its contents are concerned. Its aim is to transcend and to go beyond the circle of Time. In its outward form, it is cyclic only. Moments come and go in the process of time. But they are not the same identical moments. In the flight of History, millions of such moments are appearing and disappearing. And each moment is filled in with new events and matter. These moments are like carriers leading to the Universal.

As Swami Vivekananda said, the two aspects of History—the spiritual and the material, the real and the apparent are very important in this connection. The spiritual aspect of History is timeless. Its temporal side is in the material manifestation. They are like two wings. The infinite flight of History is symbolically represented in the cyclic form. Swami Vivekananda points at a timeless march of History—a voyage of spirit seeking the freedom of the individual from the shackles of time, from *Māyā* altogether. History is transcendental process. Behind the so-called appearance and reappearance of History, there is the eternal process, and there History is nothing but a timeless spirit. To an Advaitin, History is nothing but a mirage—manifestation of *Māyā* in space and time. History is not real in itself. Its reality is in the beyond and the behind—the consciousness and the spirit within. Therefore, History is ultimately transcendental and an all-pervasive Universal. History is neither a nation nor a geography.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Mr. Malcolm M. Willey is the Ford Foundation Consultant of the University of Calcutta. The text of his address, as em-

bodied in the article entitled 'Eternal Truths in a Changing World: The Message of Sri Ramakrishna', has come to us through the kind courtesy of Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Order.

Swami Swahananda, who is of the Ramakrishna Order, presents here his article 'Swami Vivekananda's Concept of Service (Part II).' The article forms part of his three 'T. S. Avinasilingam's sixtieth anniversary' lectures which were arranged under the auspices of the University of Madras in 1967.

Professor Donald H. Bishop of the Department of Philosophy, Washington State University, Washington, U.S.A. is deeply interested in the study of Indian thoughts. He had been to India during 1967 on a study tour when he came into intimate contact with many a thinker and scholar

of this country. His reflections on Hinduism, as presented here in the form of an article entitled 'Reflections on Hinduism And Contemporary India', is thought-provoking in many respects. The article has come to us through the kind courtesy of Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Order.

Brahmachari Mukti Chaitanya is of the Ramakrishna Order. In his article here on 'Cyclical Theory of History: Swami Vivekananda's Assessment' he discusses the spirit of History as represented in the observations of Swami Vivekananda.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ORDER AND COUNTER-ORDER (DUALISM IN WESTERN CULTURE). BY G. C. WATERSON. Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York. Pages 156 plus 10. Price \$4.75.

It is almost an instinctive tendency with man to reduce the phenomena of the world to some kind of intelligible order. The human mind is so constituted that it cannot possibly reconcile itself to chaos and confusion. The search for order in the midst of a heterogeneous multiplicity is thus deep-rooted in man. From very primitive times, thinkers have carried on this quest. In the book under review, the author has traced the attempt to evolved order from the beginnings of civilized life. In ancient Greece, Plato and Aristotle tried to rationalize every department of life, specially politics, religion and philosophy. In the middle ages, the enterprise was carried on by Saint Augustine and others. Still later Wychiffe continued the work. In the essays of Montaigne and Francis Bacon, it is possible to show that the search for order is almost a major preoccupation. And so the work has continued to engage the attention of thinkers to the present day. In poetry and drama also the quest has made itself felt. In Chaucer's *Tales*, Spenser's *Fairie Queen*, Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* and in several plays of Shakespeare, especially his tragedies, we can distinctly trace the tendency to find order in the disordered state of affairs that prevailed in those days.

The search has proceeded in two directions—from above and from below, order and counter-order. Plato starts at the top and seeks to show that whatever order is discernible in the world is a faint reproduction of the order that prevails in the world of ideas. Aristotle proceeds in the opposite direction. He starts at the bottom and seeks to reduce the data given in sense perception by the process of analysis and synthesis. Other thinkers who followed have adopted one or other of these two methods which may be spoken of as the deductive and inductive. The book makes a searching study of all aspects of thought to illustrate the two lines of enquiry. It is a book worth studying.

M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

PURUṢOTTAMJI: A STUDY. BY SRI A. D. SASTRI. Chunilal Gandhi Vidyabhavan, Surat. Pages 450 plus 10. Price Rs. 20.

Puruṣottamji was an able exponent of śuddhādvaita and hence occupies a very important place in the history of the Vallabha Sampradāya.

The book under review consists of six chapters. Besides giving a rapid account of the religious and philosophical movements that were prevalent in Gujarat in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the first chapter passes in review the systems of philosophy propounded by śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka, Bhāskara and śrī-

kanṭha. This summery prepares the ground for the exposition of śuddhādvaita which is given in chapter V. Chapter II is occupied with the biography of Puruṣottam whose dates are 1658 to 1756. The third chapter lists the works of Puruṣottam who was a very prolific writer. His works number sixty-seven. Some of them are in the nature of commentaries on stand and treatises bearing on the Vedānta; some are polemical in nature and some are independent treatises. As regards subject-matter, some works are religious and some are philosophical. The religious writings are mainly concerned with proving that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the highest deity known to the Hindu pantheon. The philosophical works, when they happen to be polemical, are occupied with demolishing rival theories. Śaṅkara however is the main target of attack. The author observes in one place that Vallabha and his adherents looked upon Śaṅkara as their chief adversary. Chapter IV calls attention to the distinctive features of the interpretation of the Upaniṣads, the *Vedānta-Sūtra* and the *Gītā* from the standpoint of śuddhādvaita. The *Bhāgavata* and other Purāṇas are also considered to be authoritative texts. In fact, the *Bhāgavata* is looked upon as having the same authority as the three well-known *prasthānas*. Chapter V gives a fairly full account of the philosophy of śuddhādvaita under the heads of epistemology, logic and theory of knowledge, the theory of error, metaphysics, ethics and theology. The account is very readable and quite instructive. The author has fully documented the points that he has made out in the course of the exposition. The comparisons with other systems of thought such as those of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and others are very illuminating. Chapter VI, which is the last, seeks to arrive at a just estimate of Puruṣottamji's contribution to religion and philosophy in general and to the Vallabha Sampradāya in particular. The author thinks that in reviving the Kṛṣṇa cult, Puruṣottam's achievements are second to those of none, not even to those of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. In respect of the śuddhādvaita philosophy, he was its chief architect. He systematized it and put it into shape. In the development of śuddhādvaita, Puruṣottam takes the same place as Vācaspati Miśra in the history of Advaita and Vedānta Deśika in the history of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

The author's evaluation would have been more complete if he had drawn more pointed attention to the shortcomings of the system of which he is not unaware. He has said in various contexts that the treatment of certain doctrines is not quite consistent with the first principles of the system. He has also said that Puruṣottam, like Rāmānuja and Madhva, has allowed his religious sense to

interfere with the free march of philosophical thought. He has also said that Puruṣottam's attempts to defend the conception of Brahman as possessed not only of attributes but also contradictory attributes are too far-fetched. He could have pursued this line of thinking and drawn the only conclusion that logically follows from it. The doctrine of *tādātmya*, which makes out that there is no essential contradiction between identity and difference, cannot be accepted without further examination.

But the book is a very commendable effort. Much patient labour and hard study have gone into its making. Students of Vedānta philosophy will derive immense benefit by studying it.

M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

OF HUMAN FREEDOM (EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF JEAN PAUL SARTRE). EDITED BY WADE BASKIN. Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York. Pages 158. Price \$4.75.

In this attractive little book the editor, Wade Baskin, has brought together eight excerpts from the writings of the French novelist and philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre. These writings cover a period of twenty years and fully reflect 'the range and diversity of his thinking on the issues which directly affect the freedom and the rights of man'. Thus they furnish an insight into the evolution of his thought 'from the resolution of the existential crisis through art to the reconciliation of existentialism and Marxism, the discovery of personal meaning and values through the social function'.

Sartre means by existentialism the theory which clearly expresses man's intense awareness of his contingency, that is, the brute fact that he happens to exist in a situation wherein he has the fullest freedom to shape his own life. 'Man enters a totally meaningless world, makes it habitable through his intelligence, confers meaning on it through his free choice. At length he is overawed by the dreadful freedom which makes him responsible for his situation and life.' This is what is signified by the term '*anguish*' which condenses in itself the entire philosophy of existentialism.

In the first extract entitled 'the meaning of existence' he writes: 'The essential thing is contingency. One cannot define existence in terms of necessity.' What he probably means is that when all is said about a thing, say, a tree or a flower, there still remains an element of mystery, an indefinable something about it which can only be characterized as its '*being*'. 'Existence is not some-

thing which lets itself be thought of; it must invade you suddenly, master you, weigh heavily on your heart.' The second extract makes a thorough psychological analysis of imagination which is at the basis of the production of works of art and their appreciation. When man realizes his essential kinship with the world of things, his feelings find expression in a work of art. But it is never a full expression of all that is in his mind. Naturally, he must leave something to the imagination of the reader or audience. An intelligent reader will be able to perceive the art behind the writing. If he does not possess the required insight, he will miss the essential quality of the writing. The reader must meet the writer more than half-way. From the very beginning he must put himself en-rapport with the author. It is an exercise in utter freedom on both sides. Through his various creations, the artist brings a new world into existence. It is a world characterized by freedom. It is a world where there is no social injustice, no exploitation of one man by another.

In the ethical sphere, freedom implies the

possibility of doing what is wrong also. The capacity for doing evil is as much implicit in man's freedom as the capacity for doing good. The tendency to do what is wrong is to be found in all men, only they seek to conceal it both from others and from themselves. Not being prepared to look within, they objectify it and seem to see it outside of themselves. This is a way of self-deception. We cannot dichotomize human beings into saints and sinners.

Other essays, which follow, deal with the evil of class hatred, of the maltreatment meted out to the Jews by the Christians, to the Negroes by the white men in America. The author's sympathies are always on the side of the underdog, the oppressed minority and the subject races in the colonies.

The essays are full of deep wisdom. They are required to be read over and over to get at their meaning. But the readers will be immensely benefited at the end.

The printing and the get up of the book leave nothing to be desired.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, SHYAMALATAL

REPORT FOR 1966-67.

This centre of the Ramakrishna Mission completed fifty-two years of useful service in 1967. Situated in a hilly region where no other hospital or medical aid is available within a radius of fifteen miles, the charitable hospital of this centre renders free medical treatment to the hill tribes who are very much backward and live under difficult circumstances.

The figures relating to the treatment of cases in the hospital, both in its Indoor and Outdoor sections, and in the Veterinary department were the following:

1. Number of patients treated :

	Men	Women	Children	Total
Indoor	72	51	84	207

Outdoor	2907	1796	2258	6961
Repeated cases				3153
Total				10,321

The hospital provides 12 beds in the Indoor section. Patients from other districts such as Nainital, Garhwal, U.P. and from Nepal sought medical aid and their number was 1,463. The cases where injections were given came to 1,759.

2. *Veterinary Department* : 2,299 animals of different categories were treated during the year out of which 1,884 were the new cases.

The management extends its heart-felt thanks and best wishes to all the generous donors, well-wishers, friends and medical firms whose unstinted help and co-operation helped the hospital in rendering service to the people and the mute animals of the hilly area.